

KENTUCKY PRESS RELEASE



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CROP PROSPECTS FOR KENTUCKY FARMERS ARE MIXED

The 2004 crop production year through July can be characterized by cool weather and frequent rain according to the Kentucky Agricultural Statistics Service. Corn and soybean production is very promising while tobacco production has been hurt by disease problems.

Kentucky burley tobacco production as of August 1 was forecast at 204.8 million pounds, an increase of 3 percent from the previous crop. The estimated crop would be 95 percent of the effective quota of 216.4 million pounds. The increase in production resulted from a small increase in harvested acreage and yield. Acres for harvest were estimated at 105,000 acres, an increase of 2,000 acres from a year earlier. Yield was estimated at 1,950 pounds per acre, up 25 pounds from the 2003 crop. Disease problems have affected tobacco production this summer. Blue mold continues to be active in the State and black shank is present in many fields. Severity of blue mold varies on a field to field basis. Burley tobacco development continues to be ahead of last year while behind the 5-year average. For the **8-State Burley Belt** production was forecast at 298.2 million pounds, 6 percent above a year ago. Yields were expected to average 1,908 pounds per acre, up 58 pounds from 2003.

Corn production in **Kentucky** was forecast at 161.9 million bushels, up 9 percent from the 2003 crop. This would be the largest corn crop since 1992. Yield was estimated at 142 bushels per acre, up five bushels from the 2003 crop. The estimated yield equals the record high set in 2001. Harvested acreage was estimated at 1.14 million acres, an increase of 60,000 acres from a year earlier. Good soil moisture has been beneficial to corn development whose stages (milk, dough and dent) continue to be ahead of last year and the 5-year average. The **U.S.** corn production was forecast at 10.9 billion bushels, up 8 percent from last year and 22 percent above 2002. Yields are expected to average 148.9 bushels per acre, up 6.7 bushels from last year. If realized, both production and yield would be the largest on record. The previous record for both was set by the 2003 crop.

Kentucky soybean production was forecast at 52.1 million bushels, down 2 percent from the large 2003 crop. The smaller production was brought about by a reduction in yield per acre. Yield was estimated at 41 bushels per acre, down two bushels from last year's record high yield of 43 bushels per acre. Harvested acreage was forecast at 1.27 million acres, an increase of 30,000 acres from the 2003 crop. Soil moisture conditions delayed planting but have been favorable for growth of second crop soybeans (following the small grain harvest). Blooming and setting pods are ahead of last year. No major diseases have been reported with the crop in mostly good to excellent condition as of early August. **U.S.** soybean production was forecast at 2.88 billion bushels, up 19 percent from 2003 and 4 percent from 2002. If realized, this would be the second largest soybean production on record. Yields are expected to average 39.1 bushels per acre, up 5.7 bushels from 2003.

Total production of **hay** by **Kentucky** farmers is expected to be about the same as the 2003 crop. **Alfalfa hay** production was forecast at 1.14 million tons, an increase of 31 percent from last year's crop. Yield per acre was estimated at 4.40 tons per acre, a record high. **Other hay** production was estimated at 5.20 million tons, down 5 percent from last year's record crop. Yield was estimated at 2.60 tons per acre. The harvested acreage of alfalfa was estimated at 260,000 acres and the other hay acreage was estimated at 2.00 million acres. Conditions have been favorable for hay growth, but quality has suffered due to frequent rain and poor drying conditions.

Kentucky apple production was forecast at 8.00 million pounds, an increase of 500,000 pounds from the 2003 crop. Farmers had been expecting a good crop but expectations were lowered by thunderstorms and high winds this spring and summer. Frequent rain also hurt their spraying programs.

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